



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

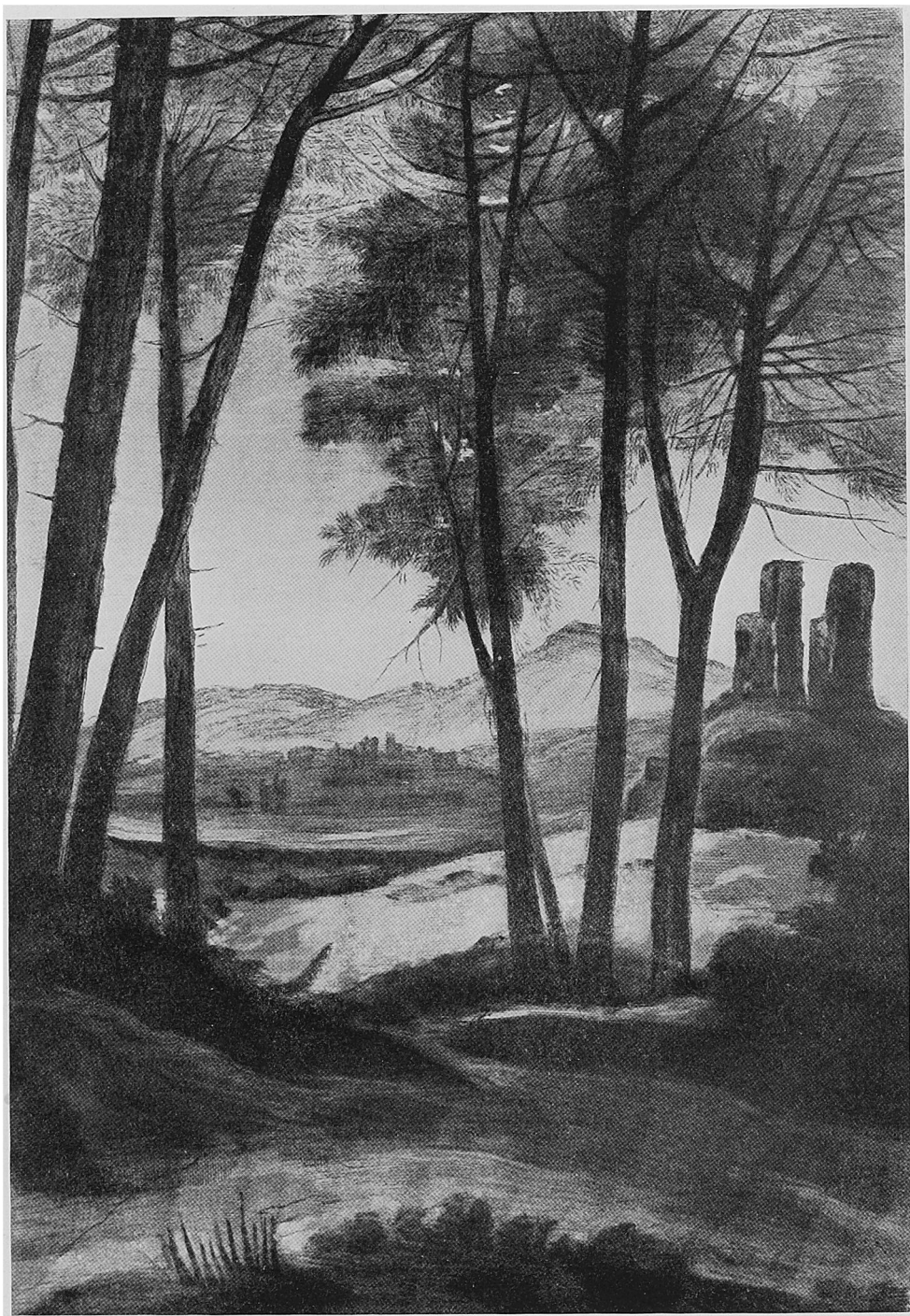
This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



LANDSCAPE. FROM A DRAWING BY CLAUDE LORRAIN. ENGRAVED BY F. C. LEWIS

ART & LIFE

INCORPORATING
THE LOTUS MAGAZINE

VOLUME XI

FEBRUARY, 1920

NUMBER 8

Claude Lorrain and His Home

BY RENÉ D'AVRIL

THE wave of Teutonic invasion in France did not reach those two tender cradles of Lorraine sensibility: the home of Jeanne d'Arc at Domrémy and that—almost as precious—at Chamagne, where the great master of landscape painting, Claude Gellée was born in 1600.

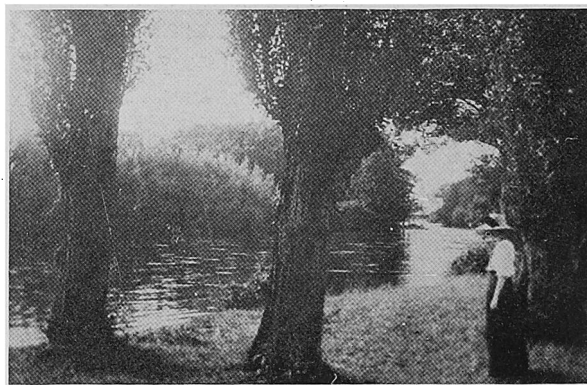
The latter home, so humble, so unchanged, from what it was in the Eighteenth century, touches us by its character, which has remained so truly local. When one happens to come upon Chamagne, from the little-frequented road which follows the beautiful forest of Charmes and unites this village to Bayon, another hamlet of the Moselle, a street unexpectedly unfolds, branching off from the main street and leading to the fields, the bouquets of trees and the silver sands of the river.

A little house, lower than the others,—there it is! Here under that poor roof, whose tiles, a little disordered, rear their heads on crooked beams, which themselves give the im-

pression of bent, old peasants, was born as a child the one who diffused the infinite light of Heaven in his art, here he was to pass his boyhood days.

How humble the childhood of the wonderful painter seems to us! His family was one of those that had the most representatives in the community. In our time one of its members was long the mayor of the hamlet and, in consequence, presided in the modest hall, which took pride in the bust of his ancestor, a replica of the one at the *Musée du Louvre*.

In Lorraine, one often comes upon persons bearing the name of Gellée (or Gelée, or Gilée). In 1643, one Didier Gellée of Marsal, was given the commission to paint the arms—"sceptre, crown and paintings"—for the memorial services of Louis XIII in the parish church of that village. Another Claude Gelée lived at Epinal from 1605 to 1619. He was a gold-and-silversmith and his house faced the portal of the church. M. A. Benoit, member of *La Société*



THIS VIEW IN THE VALLEY OF THE MOSELLE BETWEEN BAYON AND CHAMAGNE RECALLS CERTAIN LANDSCAPES IN CLAUDE'S "LIBER VERITATIS"

d'Emulation des Vosges, to whom we are indebted for these researches, is inclined to think that this Gellée was related to the painter's family, in which the given name of Claude occurred frequently.

Claude Gellée, later surnamed "*le Lorrain*," was the third of five boys born of the marriage of Jean Gellée and Anne Padore. The eldest, who was also named Jean, practised the profession of wood-engraver at Fribourg-en-Brisgau. We shall hear of him again, for he was destined to play a part in the life of the landscape painter.

But let us, for a moment, turn our attention to this child, inclined to be frail, and who for that reason, doubtless, was not made to do the hard work of the farm. We see him at this period, concentrated and detached from all purposes of study, regarded as stupid, hating his lessons at school, and preferring to roam on the neighboring hillsides, in the woods, or along the winding streams—thus simply to open his eyes, to open his mind, and, in a word, his soul, to that nature which was later to be reflected through the splendor of Roman ruins.

Chamagne! It breathes gentleness and deep peace in the lap of the meadows. Chamagne! (Etymologically, *campus agni*, the lamb's field). It is one of those names which presages its own destiny. In those days, this little village was under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the dean-ship of Epinal, which, in turn, formed part of the diocese of Toul.

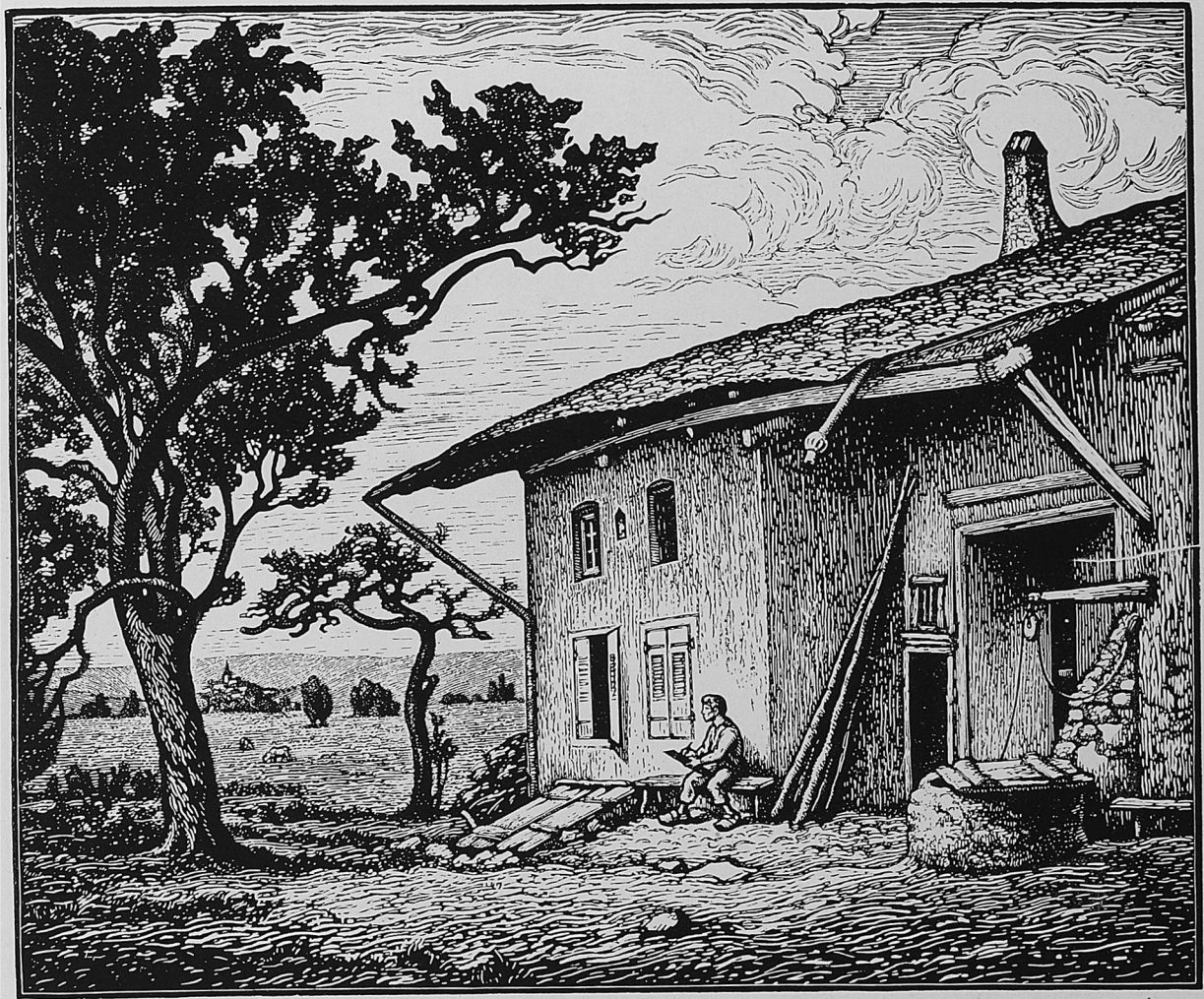
Though tradition has it that Claude was born in the Château of Chamagne, in fact there never was a château there. As M. E. Meaume has noted, this error, which has been accepted by many biographers, originated in a wrong interpretation. According to the version of the nephews of the artist, in the account which Baldinucci left of the life of Claude Lorrain, it is written: *Nacque in Castello di Chamagne*. But in this sense *castello* means village, small hamlet, and not castle or château. It is true that there did exist a château, not at Chamagne, but on the opposite bank, at Bainville-

aux-Miroirs. One wall of its ruins may still be seen, dark and rising like a giant finger against the pale sky. But, notwithstanding the statements of the grand-nephews of Claude Gellée, who, after having become rich through their uncle and having become important personages at Rome, seem to have blushed at the so humble origin of their family, he was in reality nothing more than a simple peasant, born in a house owned by his family, one of those deep houses, arranged for the storing of the crops and the sheltering of the sweating farm animals in the dark stable.

Modern times have put this legend in its proper light, and in 1840, the *Société d'Emulation des Vosges*, placed on the front of the house in Chamagne, a marble tablet with an inscription, whose letters were originally gilt but which the fogs of the Moselle have almost entirely discolored. The simple and serene beauty of Chamagne was not in a manor, but in the harmony of the succession of valleys, and the delightful shading of tones varying with the hours of the day. It had the bold and decorative forms of the trees as a frame; it reposed on river-banks, caressed by the sun, and was reflected in several branches of stream or was veiled in floating and frequent mists. Oh, how infinitely Claude preferred this Lorraine vision of nature, to the lessons of the teacher or the knowledge contained in books!

For that reason, his mind was naturally less illumined, and it remained so. Like Rembrandt, Claude could hardly write his name and he barely succeeded in learning to read. He was, therefore, as his friend Sandrart remarks: "*Scientia valde mediocri*."

As he absented himself from his classes, to wander in the fields, without apparent aim, and as neither remonstrance nor punishment could prevail over his insurmountable distaste for study, his parents apprenticed him to a pastry-cook at Toul. In the account which Baldinucci borrowed from the painter's grand-nephews, Jean Gellée and the Abbé Joseph Gellée, no



THE HOME OF CLAUDE LORRAIN. FROM A WOOD-ENGRAVING BY PAUL COLIN

mention is made of a pastry-cook. This is doubtless due to the same reason as that which induced these individuals to conceal the peasant origin of their illustrious ancestor. But Sandrart, or, to be more exact, Joachim de Sandrart, the faithful friend whom he knew in Rome in his thirties, is definite on this point, and we may believe him on the matter, for he had these facts from Claude himself.

The family of the future painter was not rich. Humble though the position of the youth at Toul and his beginnings at Rome were, they yet permitted him to accomplish his object, since, through them, he was able to earn his living with that scrupulous honesty which was ever the loyal stamp of his character. This first trade furnished the shy child, iso-

lated in a country whose language was unknown to him, with the opportunity of engaging as a domestic in the home of painters of note. There, it came to pass that after having learned much from the soil of Lorraine, almost unconsciously, without touching it with his untrained hands and merely by opening upon it his large black eyes, he was in like manner to learn more than one secret from the studios, not, at first, by painting, but by watching others paint, while his body mechanically performed menial tasks.

The child was gifted. He was irresistibly drawn in the direction his vocation was leading him. And, with the help of chance, and above all, of a tenacious will, he achieved his aim.

"Claude Gellée," says one of his com-

patriots, M. Charles Héquet, "is one of that very small class of men who, by conforming strictly to the laws of morals and honor, have succeeded, by sheer talent and courage, in bringing a great idea to fruition. Among mankind, the most honest are the rarest. Our compatriot is one of those."

What was the chain of circumstances that decided the life of the artist? It is very simple. At the age of twelve, Claude Gellée lost his father. His eldest brother, who, as we have seen, was a wood engraver at Fribourg-en-Brisgau, took him in.

Let not this title of "wood-engraver" lead us to picture an imitator of Holbein or of Albert Dürer. The young man probably made what we should today call models of applied art, that is, for example, designs of embroidery and patterns for lace-makers. In fact, we do know that, under the direction of Jean, Claude applied himself to the conventionalizing of foliage for arabesque decoration.

This kind of work, in which he gave proof of considerable taste and inventive genius, appealed to him. It also pleased one of his relatives who came from Mirecourt, a city noted for its laces, and separated from Charmes and Chamagne by gently rolling hills. This relative was going to Rome to sell those fine products of a feminine industry which still survives; for, in front of the doorsteps, the women still ply the noisy bobbins across huge frames to make the Lorraine lace. He offered to take Claude as a traveling companion, and the boy started on his journey full of hope.

To those who are surprised that, having chosen Art as his vocation, he turned his eyes toward Rome and did not dream of Paris, we recall in the first

place that, at that time, Paris was the capital of France, but not of Lorraine. Almost all of the artists of the ducal city of Nancy, like Callot and Deruet, who was one of Claude's teachers, had themselves been attracted by the mirage of Rome. The difference in customs also had some influence on his choice.

In her very complete and faithful study of *Le Lorrain*, Mme. Mark Pattison brings out the fact that, in the Sixteenth century, the French painters, in order to separate themselves from the multitude, aspired to the title of valet to the King. In the Seventeenth century, their dream was to become Academicians. With that ambition at heart, they were obliged to seek commissions for official paintings, that is for majestic paintings combining mythology and history, and to study the living models in the Turkish slaves impounded on the galleys.

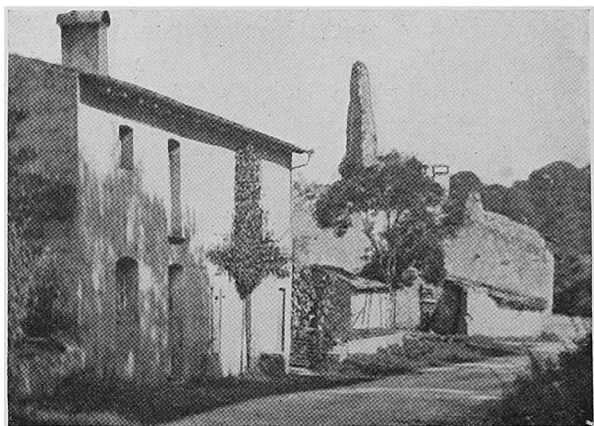
Such was the elaborate art of Lebrun. Certain it is that he was entirely unacquainted with the luminous interpretation of the outdoors which was characteristic of Claude Gellée. In Rome, the artists of all the countries of the world led a life, more free and made even more intimate and broadened by association with the Dutch artists. It was the seeking for Truth through expression, and not glory in official circles, that lent enchantment to their days and that made possible the devoted and lasting friendship between a Sandrart, a Claude Gellée, and even (though this is not so

clearly established), a Nicolas Poussin.

If we follow Claude to Rome, we find him at first with Augustin Tassi, the pupil of the two Flemish Bril brothers, who were the first to assure an independent existence for landscape painting. The painter Tassi himself was rather



THE HOUSE OF CLAUDE LORRAIN AT CHAMAGNE



RUINS OF THE CHÂTEAU DE BAINVILLE-AUX-MIROIRS



THE GRANGE OF CLAUDE LORRAIN'S HOUSE

gay and affable, in spite of gout (*"quamvis podagrae malo saepius vexato"*). Here the lad cooked, curried the horse, swept the rooms, brayed the colors, and cleaned the pallets and brushes. Shall we next follow him to Naples, at the house of Geoffroy Wiels, painter of landscapes and perspectives? Here, he likewise performed the duties of a servant, in this first period—the period of trials—of his life as an artist. If we return to Nancy with him, we see him in the obstinacy of his desire to paint portraits (he was never really master of this branch), bluntly asking Ruet, (who, be it said, acquiesced with kindness), for lessons in linear perspective.

Ah, Claude, we behold you in that city, perched on a scaffolding, painting the ceiling of the Church of the barefooted Carmelites—a monument which has long since disappeared! You thought that you would find in your beloved Lorraine, the strains that used to stir you when you were far away! Though the subtle air that you breathe, brings back to your mind the evenings when you heard the chimes of Chamagne, the beautiful autumn of vintage-time and of rural serenity, yet you remain disillusioned! In the innermost recesses of your heart, you do not fail to know that, in spite of your efforts, the art of painting portraits is not your *forte* and that, like your fellow landscape-painters, more than once you will have to yield place to the brush of another, to introduce figures in your

pictures. Moreover, the serious and formal little Court of Lorraine is far from being a circle as generously enthusiastic as that of the Rome of the Pope and Cardinals. You miss the more vibrating lights; the tremblings of the brilliant waters in the Bay of Naples, the inspiration of so many of your seascapes; and ports lit by the setting sun, which you re-created on canvas.

Then, too, perhaps you will unconsciously prefer to keep sacred in your memory, in its childish freshness, the Moselle skies, between Charmes et Bayon, the streams that glitter in their windings, the trees in harmonious groups, the hills gracefully blending with the atmosphere. Continued intimacy with the best loved scenes often renders them less precious in our eyes. Feelings of appreciation often fade in daily association. But memory—what more beautiful visions, what unsatisfied delights does it not afford to dreamers! When an artist is great enough to become imbued with such sentiments and to incorporate them in his work, then that work sings with him, it is at once his god and his country; it marks him out, wherever he may be: at Rome, the Roman Campagna, the Bay of Naples, or the ports of Marseilles and Civita-Vecchia; it stamps him with a seal which is never effaced. The old custom of giving painters surnames, baptized Claude, in quite an immortal manner. While a painter of red Venice can have no other denomination than the *Tin-*

toretto, a Lorrain, who bears the indelible stamp of the country, will be called simply, *le Lorrain*.

But we must hasten from Nancy. The horrible sight of a gilder workman falling from the scaffolding next to him, and remaining suspended in the air in agony, turned Claude forever from thought of ceiling painting. He was not at the end of his trials. He started for Rome by sea, fell ill at Marseilles, where he painted two canvases. He went through a storm and finally landed at Civita-Vecchia, under favorable auspices—that is, on the day of St. Luke, patron-saint, who is fêted with solemnity by the painters of Italy. Though he was not yet freed from material cares, this marked the beginning of his successful life.

He had already painted a few pictures, but his first dated works, known to be authentic, are his forty-four etchings (1630). "They are," says M. Emile Michel (the very eminent critic and member of *ll Institut*), "of unequal value. Nevertheless," adds this master (one of the men who leaned, with very great intelligence and interest towards the genius of the Lorrain), "several, such as *Le Bouvier*, were already marvels of grace and delicacy." This form of art compelled him to muster his talents, to refine them, to show more severity in the lines, since, in the absence of color, the lines alone remain. Nevertheless, the artist who was only thirty years of age at the time, more than once succeeded, merely by the opposition of lights and shadows, in creating atmosphere in a landscape, in suggesting the rustling of leaves, or the silent passage of clouds in a clear sky.

One knows, or rather thinks one knows, how his reputation began. One of his pictures came under the notice of a clever diplomat, Cardinal Bentivoglio. He recognized a great painter, and gave him a commission for two paintings, which he showed to Pope Urban VIII, whose confidant he was. The sovereign Pontiff admired; the whole court applauded.

From this moment, the reputation of Claude Gellée was made. He found himself overwhelmed with orders.

But, entirely apart from the way in which it was established, the glory of *le Lorrain* carried its hidden force within itself. It is impossible for a love of nature as sincere, as patient, and as unselfish, not to inspire a painter happily, whether he is named Claude Gellée, Corot, Cézanne or Harpignies. In regard to Claude, let us listen to this account of Sandrart, with whom he had formed an intimate association in their walks together to the rocks of Tivoli:

"In order to attain the very foundations of art," translates Meaume, "and to penetrate the most hidden secrets of Nature, he was always out-of-doors. From early dawn to night-fall, he devoted himself to catching the various aspects of dawn, sunrise and sunset. He prepared his colors according to the very tones themselves, as he observed them. Then returning home with his colors thus prepared, he applied them to the work he had undertaken. He devoted many years in the pursuit of this difficult and laborious method, spending his days in the country. This manner of working had so much charm for him that he always continued to follow the same method."

In reality, as Meaume intelligently remarks, he did not paint from nature, in this sense, that the pictures of his best period scarcely ever represent a known scene; but he observed Nature and put down his image on canvas or on paper, at the time of observation, in order to transfer these powerful studies upon canvases which he had left in the workshop.

To be sure, a landscape which was merely a landscape would not have been understood in his time. With the exception of the studies, the greater part of the works of Claude are compositions, the subject of which is taken, sometimes from mythology, very often from the Bible, and more rarely from purely pastoral episodes. But the decorative feature came first. The artist was wont



ABRAHAM SENDS HAGAR AWAY. BY CLAUDE LORRAIN. PINAKOTHEK, MUNICH

to say: "I sell the landscape: as to the figures, I give them."

In this sense, the celebrated *Moulin*, which is considered his masterpiece and which hangs in the Doria Palace in Rome, is in reality a scene taken from the Old Testament. The exquisite landscape in the Dresden Museum, in which M. Emile Michel traces (and all my Lorraine sensibility tells me that he is right) almost exact scenery of the Moselle and Champaigne, portrays the Flight into Egypt. The other canvas in that Museum—and that one is frankly Italian in character—is called *Polyphème*.

Need I recall that the Hermitage and the Prado possess treasures of the Master? The Museum of the Louvre is fairly rich in Claude Lorrains. Of the sixteen examples which it contains, the best is *Le Débarquement de Cléopâtre*. This canvas, in a perfect state of preservation, is

of incomparable clearness; the sky is light, the sea luminous. It is a masterpiece with which one can compare only *L'Embarquement de la Reine de Saba*, which is the property of the National Gallery.

But the private collections of Great Britain can sing the praises of Claude Lorrain, more than the examples in the National Museum of London, several of which have suffered the intemperances of time (their value, above all, it would seem, lies in establishing the æsthetic relation of the strange Turner). Those privately owned are numerous and very rich. There are the collections of the Queen, of Lord Overstone, of the Duke of Westminster, the large and magnificent pictures of Lord Ellesmere at Bridgewater House, and possibly others.

Finally there is *Le Livre de Vérité*, belonging to the Duke of Devonshire.

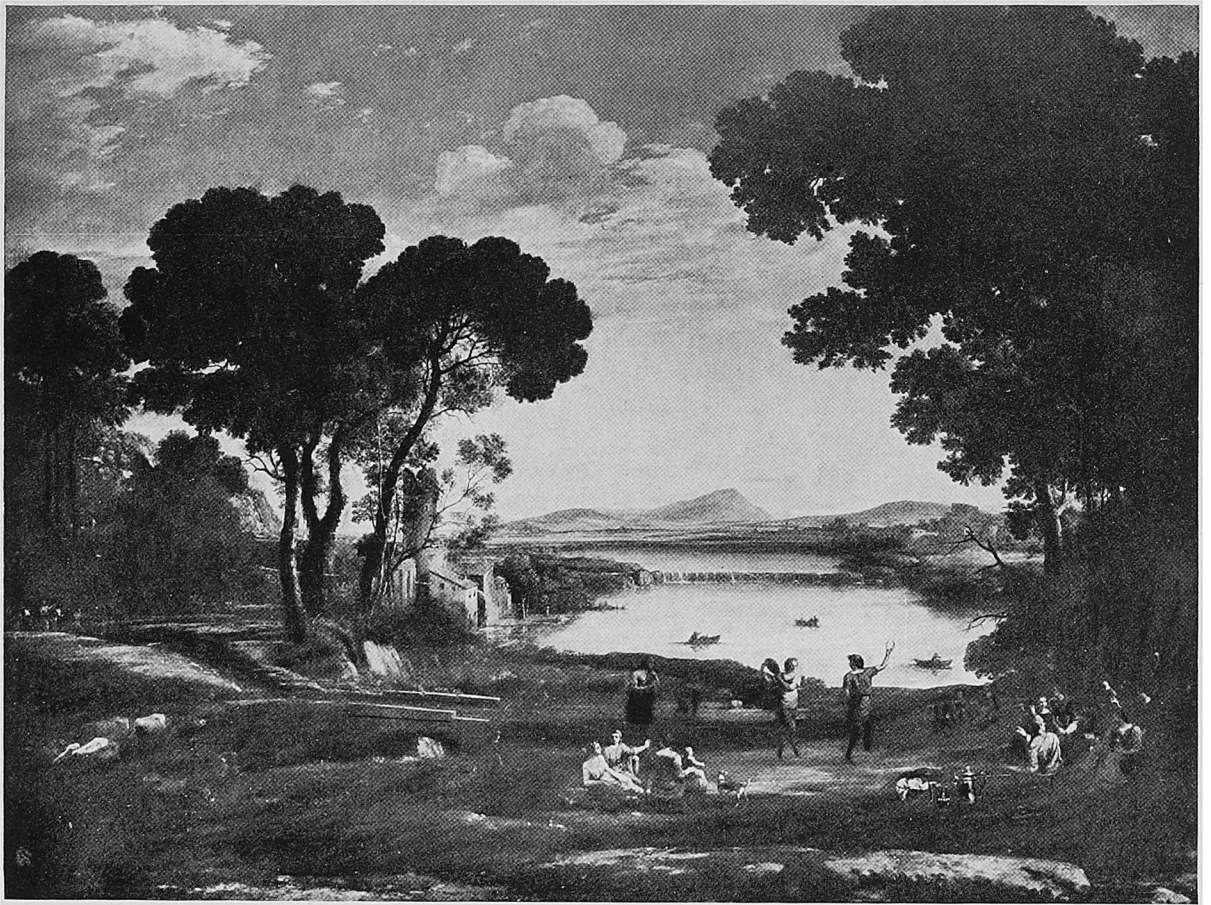
According to Baldinucci, the list of the works of Claude (so often incomplete) could be increased by means of indications furnished by the *Liber Veritas*, a collection which he also calls *Il Libro di Verità* or *Libro d'invenzioni*. This book or album of drawings was a sort of repertory. The painter, it is thought, began it and kept it scrupulously up-to-date as a guarantee against imposters. He is even credited with having said: "No picture leaves my house without having been copied in its entirety in this book."

"But a careful study of this collection of works," says the Comte Léon de Laborde in *Les Archives de l'Art français*, "does not appear to confirm the statements of Baldinucci." The book itself does not bear any of the titles which he gives it, not even that of *Liber Veritatis*, a name invented by the English editors and under which it is most universally

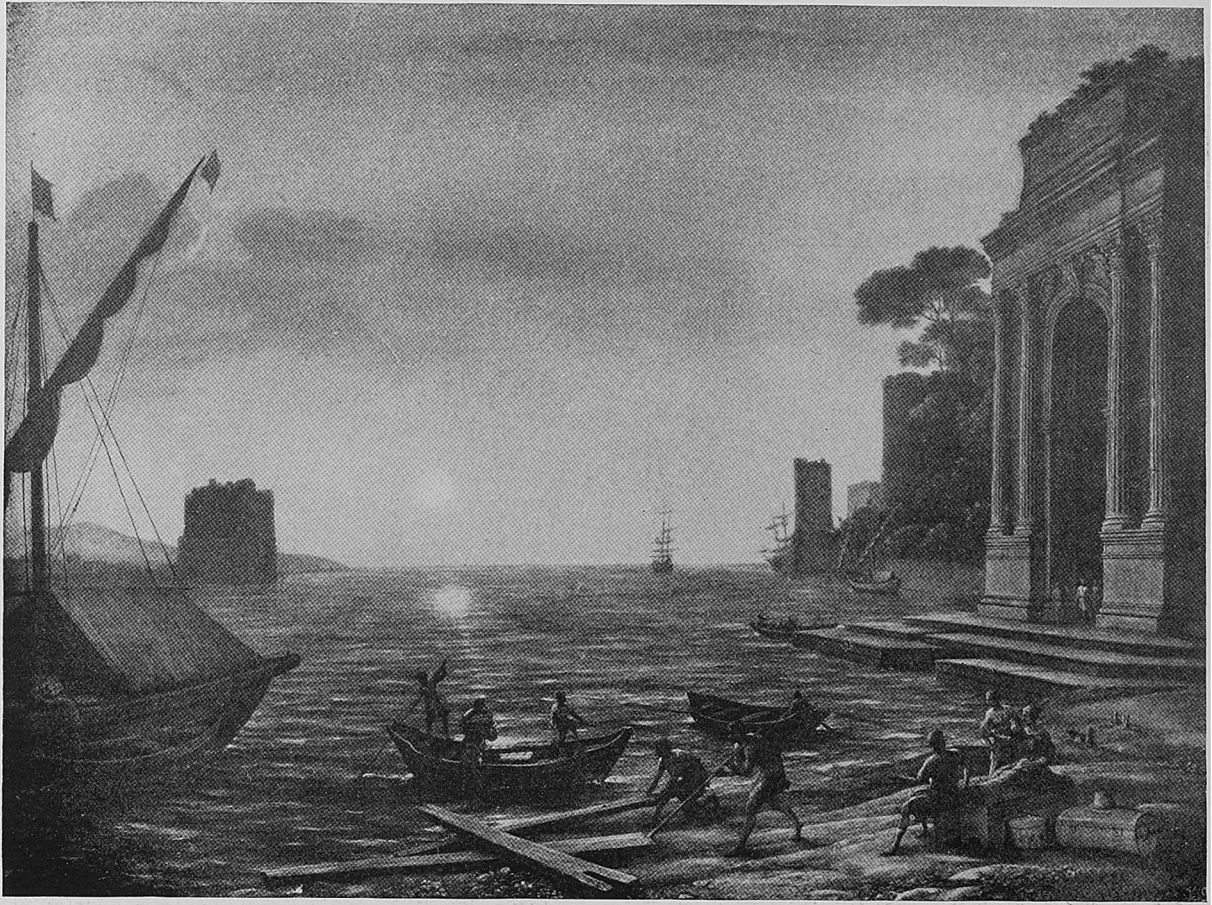
known. Added to this, the drawings are not arranged in chronological order; the name of the purchaser is often found, though not always. There are at least 135 drawings that are not dated.

The Book of Truth cannot, then, be depended upon to identify the work of Claude Lorrain. But, did the painter have many imitators? Was he not inimitable? He trained only one pupil, Jean Dominique, and was rewarded with ingratitude. But, if it cannot be used as an authority for verification, the Book of Truth yet furnishes us with one of the most fascinating insights into the genius of a master, as it were, a window opening upon his religious and inner soul, upon a soul which, from very childhood, communed with the eternal soul of things.

It contains two hundred drawings. For the most part, they are of bistre and set-off in white. "These two hundred



THE MILL. (MARRIAGE OF ISAAC AND REBECCA). BY CLAUDE LORRAIN. DORIA GALLERY, ROME



EMBARKATION OF THE QUEEN OF SHEBA. BY CLAUDE LORRAIN. PINAKOTHEK, MUNICH

drawings are two hundred pictures," writes le Comte de Laborde. "One forgets the margins of the paper or the shape of the book; one penetrates into its depths. One wanders about in these scenes and is brought face to face with nature. In the hand of the artist, the instrument is nothing; crayon or brush, paper or canvas—what matters? The soul guides the hand.

Claude died at Rome on the 23d of November, 1682, at the age of eighty-two, after having suffered from gout for forty-two years. He was buried in the church of La Trinité du Mont. But in 1840, when M. Thiers was Minister and M. de Latour-Maubourg Ambassador to Rome, the Government of Louis-Philippe deemed it fitting to have the mortal remains of Claude Gellée transferred to the vaults of the national church of Saint-Louis of the French.

His curious and delicious testament discovered in our day in the capitoline archives, and written in language which is a mixture of French, Italian and even Lorraine *patois*, settles a few of the points discussed by his biographers and, above all, shows an ardent affection for his native soil. One touching proof of this is the legacy which Claude left to the parish of Saint Nicholas, the revered patron of Lorraine.

There is no doubt that Claude Gellée had a pronounced love for the Roman Campagna, the rocks of Tibur, the cataracts, the temple of the Sibyl, and Tivoli. In the foreground of more than one of his canvases, he introduced buildings which represent the stately ruins of a temple; he portrayed the shimmering waves of many a port of Italy.

But, he never found greater poetical mystery, more enveloping serenity, than



PORTRAIT OF CLAUDE LORRAIN FROM AN ENGRAVING
BY JOHN BOYDELL, 1777

in those distances, tinted with pink, where he certainly had in mind the memory of the Moselle, of its fords and its banks near the village of Charmes.

M. Maurice Barrés, the eminent and intuitive French Academician, who has so often spoken of the painter (and even in his *Spartan Voyage*) is firmly convinced of this. His opinion has singular weight when one realizes that M. Barrés usually spends the autumn among the same scenes that saw the birth of an artist less ardent, but more Elysian than Salvator Rosa, whose work was less minute but more luminous and more airy than Ruysdael.

At Nancy, there is a monument which the master Rodin carved for that city in honor of *Le Lorrain*; at its base the steeds of the sun, scarcely visible in the morning mist, made a deep impression. And yet, Nancy, where Claude lived, cannot produce a single canvas of the master; while Grenoble, at the other extremity of France, owes to chance the good fortune of possessing two of them

and Dresden and the Pinakothek at Munich also have the same good fortune which is almost an insolence on the part of avowed enemies of the Lorraine race.

A single copy of *The Liber Veritatis*, in three folio volumes, containing the facsimile of Richard Earlom, has been available for consultation since 1853 at the Library of the City of Nancy. But, the Lorraine painters, and the engravers, such as Paul Emile Colin (some of whose works we consider worthy of the *Liber Veritatis*), without imitating Claude, often suggest him and in irresistible fashion, since they have before their eyes the same background, and terraced foregrounds which enchant us in *Le Bouvier*, *la Danse Champêtre*, or *la Fête villageoise*.

When Joachim de Sandrart parted from his friend to return to Nuremberg to end his days, he made a portrait of him which seems to us a striking resemblance. Here *le Lorrain* is shown with an honest and frank expression. His visage is square and strongly built; he has bushy black hair.

But, to offset this description, the precision of which is almost embarrassing for our admiring contemplation, is it not fitting to introduce the entirely spiritual portrait, which, in such lofty terms, the great French philosopher has given us of the landscape-painter:

"*Le Lorrain* is pre-eminently a painter of light and one might term his works the intrusion of light and all its manifestations, great and small, whether in the larger developments or in the most varied accidents, on land, on water, in the skies, in his eternal home."

Gellée's home, very old, very humble, sinks unobserved in its corner of the Vosges. It would be fitting to make of it a shrine for the pilgrimages of national art devotees, to preserve it with affection, to prop it with gratitude, and piously to hand it down to our sons, as the ancestors of Claude bequeathed it to us. The Art world, and especially Italy, should fall upon both knees before it.

[A brief Bibliography of Claude Lorrain will be found on page 466.]